

Conventions of the EPIC

1. **Epic Hero-** The epic hero represents his nation or culture. He must be noble and possess undying virtue.
2. **Lengthy Narrative-** The epic must span several books, cantos or chapters
3. **Lofty Tone and Style-** The poem must assume a grave and serious tone. It must be written in grandiose style to distinguish it from works of lower order.
4. **Epic Similes-** The epic simile is an extended comparison between one element or character of the poem and some foreign entity.
5. **Catalogs / Genealogies-** The epic will often include inventories and catalogs of characters, equipment or some other element of the plot. The poem will also supply expansive genealogies for important characters or artifacts.
6. **Supernatural Involvement-** The epic always features some form of divine intervention. Otherworldly figures will either assist or antagonize the hero.
7. **Invocation-** Most epic poems begin with an invocation to some higher power. Most often the poets invoke the Muses. Calliope is the Muse of epic poetry.
8. ***In Medias Res-*** Many epics commence *in medias res* or "in the midst of things." The narrative opens after a good deal of the important events of the epic has already transpired.
9. **Voyage Across the Sea-** The epic hero and / or other characters will often journey across the sea to discover new lands or explore distant regions.
10. **Epic Battles-** Vivid descriptions of mighty battles, either one-on-one duels between universal champions or the amassed engagement of powerful armies, are a common feature of the epic poem.
11. **Trip to the Underworld-** A visit to the underworld is also a common motif of the epic. The hero will often gain intelligence from the departed spirits.